

Farm Machinery Safety on Public Roads

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

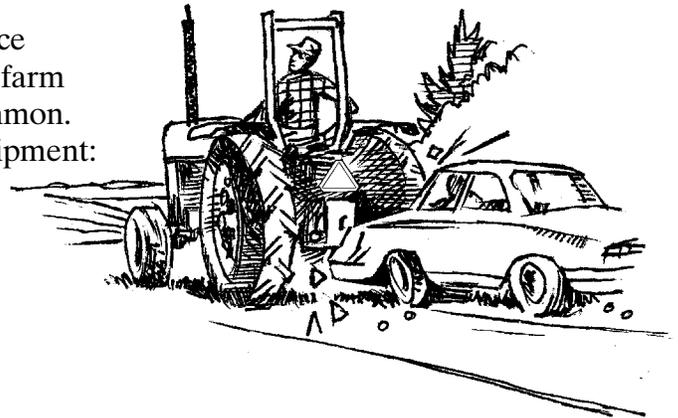
- Drive slowly when operating a tractor or other farm equipment on a public road.
- Follow all state and local traffic laws.
- Pull off onto the shoulder to let traffic pass if there's enough room.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.



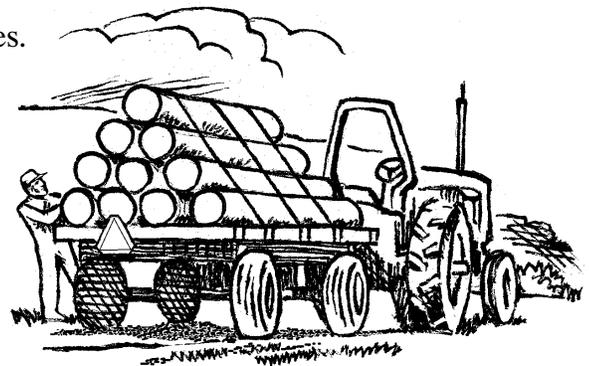
Accidents are all too common

- Each year, thousands of farm vehicles are involved in accidents on public roads.
- Most of the collisions between tractors or other slow-moving farm equipment and cars or trucks occur on dry, open highways during the day.
- A major reason for these accidents is the difference in speed between cars or trucks and slow-moving farm machinery. Rear-end collisions are especially common.
- Accidents also occur when operators of farm equipment:
 - drive too fast, especially when turning or pulling a heavy load
 - drive partially over the center line
 - run into a tree or other fixed object
 - are young and inexperienced at driving



Check before you go

- Before operating farm machinery on a public road, be sure to do the following:
 1. Check your hitch connections, including locking devices.
 2. Check the load. Make sure it's secure, balanced, and equipped with brakes. Also make sure it's light enough for your vehicle to safely handle.
 3. Be sure your [slow-moving vehicle \(SMV\)](#) emblem is clean, unfaded and properly affixed. See your supervisor if the [SMV](#) is missing or in poor condition.
 4. Ask about other markings and lights required by law, and be sure all lights are operating properly.
 5. Inspect the condition of your tires.
 6. Lock tractor brake pedals together. See your supervisor if you have any questions.



Make sure your load is secure.

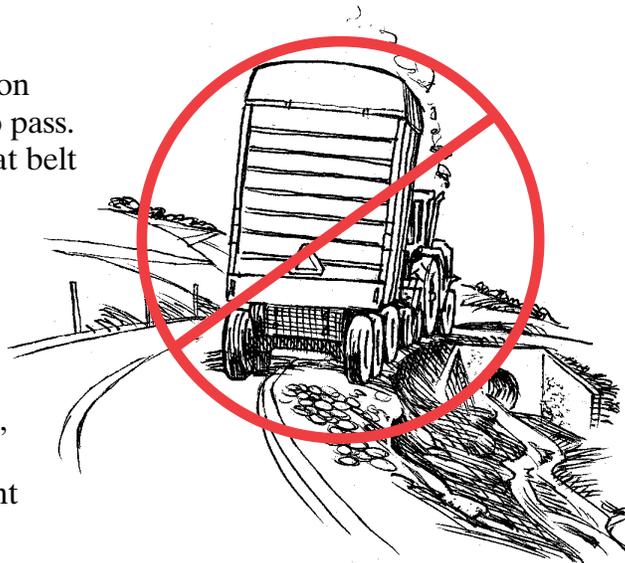
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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Farm Machinery Safety on Public Roads

Safety on the road

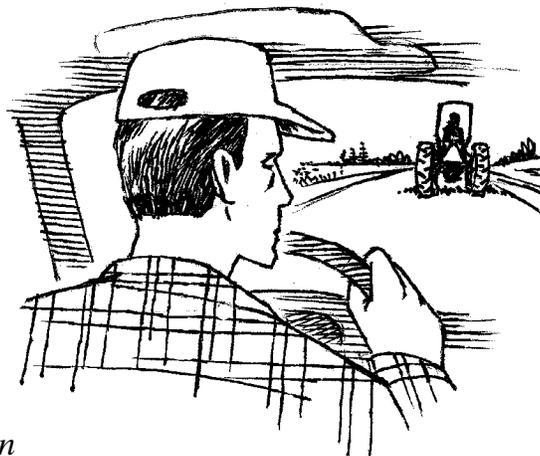
- Avoid traveling on public roads after dark.
- Follow all state and local traffic laws, including laws on speed, signaling, signage and allowing other traffic to pass.
- Use all safety equipment. This includes wearing a seat belt when one is provided.
- Slow down on turns, curves and when pulling a heavy load.
- Pull off the road to let traffic pass if the shoulder is wide enough and smooth enough.
- Be on the lookout for potential hazards such as soft shoulders, narrow right-of-ways, loose gravel, bumps, potholes and deep ruts.
- Don't take chances by pulling out onto a road in front of moving traffic. Enter the road very slowly if your view is obstructed.
- Don't operate a farm vehicle if you have been drinking alcohol, taking drugs, are overtired or ill.



Avoid soft shoulders and narrow right-of-ways.

A few more safety tips

- If you are driving a car or truck and spot a vehicle with an [SMV emblem](#) in front of you, slow down. Remember that farm equipment with an SMV travels at 25 miles an hour or less.
- Never allow passengers or children to ride on tractors, wagons or other farm machinery.
- Wear sunglasses when operating farm machinery on sunny days to help cut down the glare.
- Always drive defensively. Keep your eyes on the road ahead and on other traffic.



Slow down when you're behind a vehicle with an SMV.

Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Farm Machinery Safety Do's and Don'ts**.

FARM MACHINERY SAFETY DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

- Secure hitches and loads ahead of time.
- Slow down on curves, turns, and when pulling a heavy load.
- Stay to the right. Don't drive partially over the center line.

DON'T:

- Operate farm machinery without a slow-moving vehicle ([SMV emblem](#)).
- Drive down a hill in high gear with a heavy load.
- Operate a tractor or other farm machinery if you have been drinking.

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